State;

(b) whether major towns/cities of the State remain unconnected with State Capital or *inter se* between various districts causing hardships/setback to the development of the State;

(c) whether there is any proposal under Government's consideration to connect Hissar-Barwala with Narwana junction and further to link the same with Semand-Patiala upto Chandigarh; and

(d) whether the Railway Ministry propose to connect Ambala-Pehowa-Kaithal which falls in a rich agricultural land?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI C.K. JAFFER SHARIEF): (a) No, Sir. Haryana is well served by anefficient and extensive rail network.

(b) No, Sir. With the conversion of Bhatinda-Hissar-Rewari, being completed by 30.06.94 even those towns which were not connected to Chandigarh owing to being on M.G. will now get connected.

(c) and (d) No, Sir.

Completion of Jakhapura-Banspani rail line, Orissa

7844. SHRI RAHASBIHARI BARIK: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to State:

(a) the target date fixed for the completion of Jakhapura-Banspani line in Orrisa;

(b) the progress made so far in the construction of that line;

(c) the progress expected by the end of the Eighth Five Year Plan; and

(d) the amount allocated for that project so far?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI C.K. JAFFER SHARIEF): (a) Target date for completion not yet fixed because environmental clearance for the complete project has not yet been received from the Ministry of Environment.

(b) 33 kms. line Jakhapura-Daitari completed. Earthwork commenced on 100 - kms of the route out of 124 kms. cleared by Ministry of Environment.

(c) Depends upon environmental clearance from Ministry of Environment for the project as a whole and the availability of resources.

(d) Funds allocated for the Project so far are as follows:

1992-93	Rs. 10 crores
1993-94	Rs. 25 crores
1994-95	Rs. 23 crores.

Quality of Food Supplied in Delhi-Howrah Express

7845. SHRI PARMESHWAR KUMAR AGARWALLA: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to State:

(a) whether he has recently received any complaints about the bad quality of food being served on Delhi-Howrah Rajdhani Express;

(b) if so, what action has been taken in this regard;

(c) whether he would furnish details of the improvements made in the catering units as well as in the quality of food served on this train; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI C.K. JAFFER SHARIEF): (a) and (b) Some Hon'ble Members of Parliament have sent their observations for improvement in Catering Service on this train which are being acted upon depending on feasibility.

(c) and (d) Cooking of meals is being undertaken at modernised Base kitchens. Drinking water in sealed bottles of 1000 ml. capacity are now being served to all the passengers on this train. Beside existing a-la-carte items snacks and soup from reputed companies have also been introduced. Special care is also being

taken to keep the equipment and appliances in good fettle on the pantry cars of this prestigeous train. Catering service is being monitored at the appropriate level.

Expenditure on gauge conversion Programme

7846. SHRI B.K. HARIPRASAD: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to State:

(a) whether it is a fact that there has been reports of railways over-spending its resources in pursuit of its gauge-conversion programmes, coupled with inadequate availability of rolling stock, would lead to idle capacity;

(b) whether the Standing Committee of Railways had in its report last year-end, advised the Railway Ministry to review its gauge-conversion policy and re-arrange plan priorities and if so, whether the Ministry has paid attention to this factor;

(c) whether the Indian Railways are at present lagging behind in signalling and telecommunication technology whereas the world over it has been recognised that improved signalling could reduce the headway between trains and allow more trains to ply over a given length and it could also augment capacity reserves by as much as 30%; and

(d) whether the Railways would pay adequate attention towards revamping its out-moded signalling and telecommunication system to consolidate the gains accrued over the other fronts?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI C.K. JAFFER SHARIEF): (a) The expenditure on gauge conversion is being undertaken in a planned manner. Adequate rolling stock is being acquired to meet the projected traffic.

(b) Yes, Sir. The routes taken up for gauge conversion have been carefully selected out of the total metre gauge system on the basis of the need for alternative routes being met, of taking up missing links and the lines required on strategic/operational consideration. Thus, out of a total of 24,000 kms. of metre gauge and over 4000 kms. of narrow gauge, only about 12,000 kms. have been identified for conversion and of this only 6000 kms. is planned to be converted in the Eighth Plan.

(c) and (d) Improvements to signalling and telecommunication technology are considered keeping in view the need and availability of resources as is true for any other segment. Re-vamping the out-moded signalling and telecommunication system is planned accordingly.

Surrendering Funds Provided for Passenger Amenities

7847. SHRI RAJNI RANJAN SAHU: SHRI SURESH PACHOURI:

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to State:

(a) whether it is a fact that by and large all Zonal Railway have been surrendering even the meagre funds provided for passenger amenities;

(b) if so, the main reasons for not utilising the funds for meeting the passenger amenities; and

(c) the steps being taken to improve the standard of passenger amenities?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI C.K. JAFFER SHARIEF): (a) to (c) The surrender of funds in the recent years had been due to unforseen circumstances like delay in availability of site, failure of contractors, non-availability of material, climatic factors, etc. However, it is the continuing endeavour of the Railways that funds allotted are fully utilised and an all-out effort was made, in 1993-94, to ensure that there were no surrenders. Provisional estimates of expenditure indicate that the funds provided under the Plan Head "Passenger and Other Railway Users amenities" during 1993-94 have been spent in full.

Railways conduct periodical surveys to